UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/ICEF/1993/P/L.3/Add.1
26 March 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
Programme Committee
1993 session

FOR INFORMATION

RECOMMENDATION TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

GLOBAL FUNDS PROGRAMME RECOMMENDATION: REVISED 1992-1993 AND PROPOSED 1994-1995 PROGRAMME BUDGETS

Addendum

Global funds in the context of country programmes: an information note

SUMMARY

In response to requests made during informal consultations with members of the Executive Board, the present information note explains the evolution of UNICEF country programmes, following a programme approach. Global funds allocations are always made within the framework of country programmes, and criteria for allocation include seizing special opportunities, support for programme innovation and experimentation of new ideas, support for programme acceleration and operational support when programmes are threatened due to unforeseen national budgetary constraints. Such support may extend to one or two years, after which national budgets and/or country programmes take over fully.

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Background

1. During recent informal consultations with members of the Executive Board, UNICEF was requested to outline the relationship between its country programmes of cooperation and the support provided by global funds. The secretariat was also requested to provide the criteria used in the allocation of global funds. The present information note responds to those requests.

The evolution of UNICEF country programmes

2. Since its founding in 1946, and well into the early 1960s, UNICEF programme assistance was based on projects, initially for emergency needs and later moving into child health, principally for disease control and eradication. While the scope of programme assistance broadened into nutrition, education and water supply and sanitation, the mode of cooperation remained based on projects.

3. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, developing countries began to formulate national development plans, adopting a long-term development planning methodology. In 1967, UNICEF adopted the country programme approach, with UNICEF assistance an integral part of national development efforts. The project approach was abandoned in favour of the programme approach; implementation is undertaken through the Government or national institutions, with outside expertise employed only where a transfer of technology or highly specialized skills are involved or extra operational support is required.

4. As they have evolved over time, UNICEF country programmes are currently characterized by the following features:

(a) They are developed as part of national programmes based on:

(i) A comprehensive situation analysis of children and women;

(ii) The national development plan or government priorities;

(iii) Policies adopted from time to time by the Executive Board;

(iv) Past experience of cooperation;

(v) Lessons learned from evaluations;

(vi) Complementary actions of other development partners, United Nations agencies, donors and non-governmental organizations;

(vii) A domestic dialogue and debate on the strategic interventions developed in response to the needs of children and women under the circumstances;

(b) They are generally of four to five years duration, according to the national development planning cycles;

(c) They are linked to national development activities at both national and subnational levels;

(d) They have the flexibility to accommodate changes within the framework approved by the Executive Board and in agreement with the Government;

(e) On the UNICEF side, they are overseen and implemented by field offices, which enjoy considerable autonomy;

(f) Goals and targets are set at national and subnational levels and implemented through management by objectives in varying circumstances.

5. Since often neither UNICEF nor national resources are adequate to meet all the needs of children and women in each country, prioritization of needs and selectivity of interventions are agreed upon in each country setting.

Criteria for the allocation of global funds

6. Allocations from global funds, especially from the Programme Funds for the 1990s Goals (PF90s), are always made in the context of country programmes. As currently defined, the Interregional Fund for Programme Preparations, Promotion and Evaluation is now used more for headquarters operations, while the Regional Funds for Programme Preparation, Promotion and Evaluation meet the operational needs of regional offices. The Emergency Programme Fund is used for emergency purposes.

7. Allocations from PF90s generally fall under one or more of the following categories:

(a) Seizing of opportunities. Opportunities for new initiatives or for accelerating progress in ongoing programmes often occur due to changes in Government, ministers or policies. Since programmes are prepared several years ahead and resources are already committed, PF90s provide modest but valuable resources to seize immediately such opportunities;

(b) Innovation and experimentation. National budgets often do not include support for innovation and experimentation because of their tentative nature and uncertain outcome. Allocations are often made from PF90s to allow experimentation of certain approaches and testing of innovative ideas;

(c) Acceleration. The momentum of programme acceleration is often unpredictable since it depends on several factors. Because the already identified needs of children often exceed resources available to Governments and UNICEF, it is difficult for government budgets and UNICEF country programmes to set aside funds that are not earmarked for specific activities. Thus, when exceptional opportunities arise for accelerating programme implementation, there is usually no funding available until the next budget or programme cycle. In such circumstances, PF90s provide bridging support for programme acceleration until national budgets and country programmes can absorb and sustain such activities;

(d) Unforeseen budgetary support. During the 1980s, many countries went through recessionary phases that led to budgetary cut-backs, most often in the social sector. PF90s provided immediate support in such situations, before adjustments could be made, to prevent the collapse or slowing down of

programmes, especially those related to major decade goals and those with a high impact on children's well-being. Given the continuing fragility of the economies of many developing countries, such support undoubtedly will be needed in the 1990s.

8. A question sometimes raised is why the funds are not distributed among country programmes if they are meant to support those programmes. The distribution of the funds among all countries would add only a small amount to each country programme and deprive UNICEF of the opportunity to respond to special opportunities and needs that do not arise evenly and predictably in all countries. Global funds appropriately are not allocated evenly among countries.

9. Support provided by global funds is generally short-term in nature, for the most part lasting one or two years, after which necessary adjustments could be made in national budgets and/or country programmes.

10. In making allocations, priority is given to countries most in need and where the rapid reallocation of country programme resources is not feasible.

Means for receipt of supplementary funds

11. Global funds also serve as a means for receiving supplementary funding for countries where categories of intercountry needs are identified and there is donor interest in funding these needs. Support for specific countries is also channelled through this window when new funding opportunities arise for an identified need but a supplementary funding proposal was not included in the country programme prepared previously. Examples include support for polio vaccines provided by Rotary International, support for vaccines in China provided by the trade unions of the United Kingdom and support for improving family nutrition in Indonesia by the Swiss Development Corporation.

12. As described in paragraph 7 of the global funds programme recommendation (E/ICEF/1993/P/L.3), allocations from global funds are made by the Child Survival and Development Committee, which is headed by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes. Allocations are made after an exhaustive process of reviewing proposals by technical specialists and programme managers who are knowledgeable about both programme content and the situation of the country concerned.